

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2332

INFO CINCPAC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 8616

CINCPAC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, TH, US

SUBJECT: U.S. FORCES WITHDRAWAL

1. FORMER FONMIN THANAT KHOMAN RAISED THE QUESTION OF FUTURE THAI/U.S. SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME LAST NIGHT. THANAT REPEATED HIS WELL-KNOWN THESIS THAT THE KUKRIT GOVERNMENT HAD MISHANDLED THE ISSUE OF AN AMERICAN RESIDUAL PRESENCE. HE EXPRESSED THE FERVENT HOPE THAT THE U.S. WOULD NOT USE THE MARCH 20 DECISION OF THE RTG AS A PRETEXT FOR A WITHDRAWAL FROM THIS PART OF ASIA.

2. I TOLD THANAT THAT I COULD ASSURE HIM THAT IT WAS NOT OUR INTENTION TO TIPTOE AWAY. THE FACT WAS THAT THE RTG HAD TAKEN AN OFFICIAL POSITION TO WHICH WE WERE RESPONDING.

3. THANAT REPLIED THAT IN ITS ROLE AS CARETAKER, THE KUKRIT GOVERNMENT HAD NOT HAD THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE A DECISION OF THIS SIGNIFICANCE. HE SAID HE WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO ASSURE THAT NEW COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS SATISFACTORY TO BOTH GOVERNMENTS WERE READIED.

4. I TOLD THANAT THAT I WAS CONFIDENT THAT SOPHISTICATED AND FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE WORKED OUT AND THAT I WAS PREPARED TO EXPLORE THIS POSSIBILITY WITH THE NEW

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GOVERNMENT. THANAT SAID HE WAS REASSURED BY MY

ATTITUDE AND THAT, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT EXPECT TO BE GIVEN
ANY OFFICIAL POSITION, HE WOULD SEE WHAT COULD BE DONE.

5. COMMENT: THE FOREGOING IS REPORTED AS INDICATIVE OF
THE SORT OF OBLIQUE APPROACHES WHICH WE ARE GETTING.
MOST OF THIS KIND OF TALK HAS HERETOFORE BEEN IN
MILITARY CIRCLES, BUT THE IMPRESSION IS WIDESPREAD THAT
THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY SWEEP WAS AT LEAST PARTIALLY CAUSED
BY DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF
THE AMERICAN RESIDUAL PROBLEM AND WE SHOULD BE PREPARED
TO HINT DISCREETLY AT THE KINDS OF ACTIVITIES WHICH
INTEREST US ALONG THE LINES OF STATE 081254 IN THE
NEAR FUTURE.
WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NNN

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